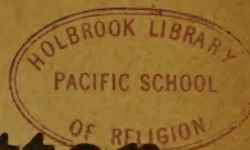


The Christian News-Letter

Edited by
J. H. OLDHAM



No. 98

SEPTEMBER 10TH, 1941

DEAR MEMBER,

In his latest broadcast "American Commentary," Mr. Alistair Cooke warned us not to expect too much just now from American help. The ordinary American is apparently not yet keyed up to any intensive war-effort, since his imagination has not yet been kindled. Faced with the prospect of drastic curtailment of their incomes and interference with their normal ways of life, "at least half the little men are digging their toes in everywhere and saying, 'No, I don't want to'."

THE DOLDRUMS

In this country such an attitude is not so uncommon as we should like to believe. By nature British imaginations are no less sluggish. It is true that, unlike the Americans, we have had a vivid personal experience of war, and that the great peril and deliverance of Dunkirk and the bombing of our cities did inspire our people to extraordinary effort and to an unusual readiness for self-sacrifice. As with the survivors of a shipwreck, the experience of a common danger produced a human comradeship in which inertia and selfish interests were temporarily blotted out. But it is disquieting to find how quickly the lull which we have been enjoying and the hope of American or Russian aid have induced some relaxation of effort and have diminished production. Every recent Government spokesman has sounded a note of grave warning.

We may hope that this relapse is only a passing episode which can soon be retrieved. But, for all of us who are looking forward to a better social and international order, it is a danger-signal which we shall be wise to heed; and it suggests some searching and uncomfortable questions. Obviously such an order can only be achieved if large numbers of people display a high degree of unselfishness and resolution. But if our supply of these virtues diminishes so quickly at the smallest excuse, even while the physical danger is still acute, how is it to be maintained when the war is over? Are not our hopes fantastically out of touch with reality and foredoomed to failure by "the destructive unreliability of men and women"? When we look back to the last war and remember the steady decline in the moral temper of the nation, from the mood of Rupert Brooke to that of the "hard-faced" profiteers of 1919, on what grounds can we hope to avoid a similar debacle?

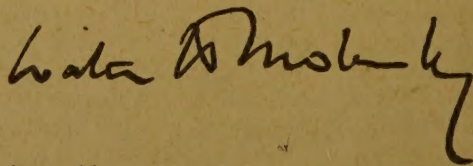
For us, readers of the C.N-L., and for people like us, the practical question is, "What example are we going to set?" As Christians who have gained some inkling of our social responsibilities, we have—or should have—spiritual resources which others have not. In the moral campaign our place should be among the shock-troops, but what sort of shock-troops are we likely to be? At the level of our conscious minds, we want to do our part. But does this desire really dominate us, and are we even beginning to prepare ourselves to pay the price? Or are we uneasily aware that it may entail the loss of the comfort and security to which we have grown used? Rather faint-heartedly we may hope that, if called on for a great sacrifice, we shall not be found wanting. But when we probe our minds, don't we often catch ourselves banking on the assumption that we shan't in fact have to sacrifice very much, and that we can have a new order on the cheap?

THE UNDIVIDED MIND

These are questions which everyone must answer for himself. But too many of us suffer from the double-mindedness so clearly diagnosed by Mr. Castle in his recent Swarthmore Lecture "The Undivided Mind."¹ Our fundamental defect, he says, is our lack of "Christian imagination to see the nature of our responsibilities." The cause of this lies deep in "the traditions, self-interests and mental habits that have lodged themselves in our unconscious so obstinately as to assume the nature of the ineradicable human instincts themselves. They have become part of that solid body of acceptances about which we have ceased to think, but which determine our major attitudes." Probably few of us, at least in wartime, think of ourselves as having "great possessions." But many of us are like the Rich Young Man in the Gospel, in being virtually enslaved to whatever possessions we have ; and so, without quite realizing it, we too are among those saying sullenly, "No, I don't want to." But, if so, we clearly rule ourselves out as effective soldiers of God. For, in words which Mr. Castle quotes from Kierkegaard, "With an insincere man God can have nothing to do . . . there is one sin which makes grace impossible, that is insincerity."

Mercifully God sometimes gives us a second chance. To recognise how insidiously easy it would be for us to retrace the melancholy cycle of 1914-1919 may be to take the first step on a different path. Even self-knowledge need not daunt us. The rawest recruit may voluntarily put himself in the hands of the Army to be made into a good soldier, so that, by stringent training, even his semi-automatic reactions to danger or to the word of command may be radically altered. Then, if he does his best, he need not worry because it is only a poor best ; that is no longer his own responsibility. He gains release and a full development of his powers, such as they are, just because the main direction and purpose of his life is settled. So the Christian in search of an undivided mind needs no new prescription, but only that the old Christian commonplaces should come alive for himself personally. By the time you read this, the National Day of Prayer will be over, but all worship, public or private, is our opportunity. "Seek and ye shall find." The only condition is good faith.

Yours sincerely,



¹ Allen & Unwin, 1s. 6d.

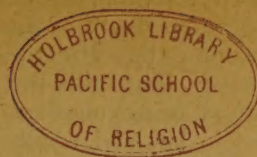
Subscriptions—The rate of subscription to the News-Letter is 12s. 6d. (\$3.0 in U.S.A. and Canada) for one year, and 6s. 6d. (\$1.50 in U.S.A. and Canada) for six months. Back numbers—4d. each, 1s. 2d. for 6, 1s. 11d. for 12 copies. Post free.

Bound Volumes—Volume I (Nos. 0-26), Volume II (Nos. 27-52), Volume III (Nos. 53-78). Uniformly bound in green cloth with gold lettering and index, 8s. 6d. each, post free.

Indices—Indices to Nos. 0-26, Nos. 27-52, and Nos. 53-78, 1s. each, post free.

All communications and subscriptions should be sent to—

THE CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER, ARLOSH HALL, MANSFIELD ROAD, OXFORD.



BRITAIN AND INDIA

By WILLIAM PATON

The British public has on the whole remained ignorant of a situation which has been more continually put forward in enemy propaganda in other countries, and has offered more difficulties to the friends of the British cause in America, than possibly any other single aspect of imperial policy and achievement. The Indian situation has offered, and not for the first time, an instance of the same facts being interpreted in totally different ways. (Another even more remarkable example was the 1935 Government of India Bill, which was treated in the ultra-Right press of this country as an irresponsible essay in revolutionary change, and in nearly all the Indian press as a timid and reactionary measure; it was indeed sometimes difficult to believe that the journalistic comments related to the same Bill.) To-day in Britain there is something of the same gulf in real understanding. Newspapers print little Indian news; much is made of the contributions of Princes to the buying of Spitfires: only those people who have some special link with India are aware of the ever-widening gulf, or know how deep and stubborn is the mistrust which has come to occupy the hearts of men who are by no means what is called "extreme."

A DIVISION IN JUDGMENT

But even among those in the two countries who know the facts reasonably well there is a considerable division in judgment. On one side it is urged that the Indian National Congress has put itself out of court by its attempt to impose its own political gospel of independence as the price of co-operation in the war effort, and still more at a later

stage by its inconsistent adoption of non-violence and its claim to be allowed to preach publicly against the war without "embarrassing" the government. It is sincerely felt that whatever Indian Nationalists may say they know quite well that the war is being fought not about the rights of British imperialism but for the chance of freedom and decent living for all men everywhere. Moreover, is it not true that the demands of the Congress, the Muslims, the Princes and the smaller minorities are so mutually incompatible that such a slogan as "give India freedom" is almost literally unmeaning? Let the Indians therefore first agree on some constitutional plan which will work, before they demand a major political change in the middle of a war, and in the meantime let us concentrate on the war and encourage those in India who will help us in it.

THE INDIAN CASE

But in India things do not look like that. To begin with, the 1935 constitution, especially the provisions for all-India federation, had virtually no friends in India and those who, like the present writer, believed that it had considerable merits must face the plain fact that not many Indians thought so. At the same time the part of the constitution which dealt with the Provinces had worked; the Congress had majorities in seven provinces and formed governments which, by the acknowledgment of British officials, had done very well. When the war came, Indian opinion had been for long violently anti-Fascist and anti-Nazi (I remember the horror with which Mr. Rajagopalachariar, the

Prime Minister of Madras, spoke to me in November 1938 of the Nazi Pogrom at that time), and there could be no doubt of the strength of feeling against the Hitlerite aggression and world policy. But India was declared belligerent without being consulted, an act perfectly correct in law and wholly constitutional, and yet it is not only Gandhians but hard-headed ex-Indian civilians in the clubs who will be found to say that it was a mistake and that things could and should have been done differently. Indian sense of national dignity was affronted ; she is after all surrounded by Oriental states which, though infinitely her inferiors in the arts of living and with little of her ancient and splendid history, are yet free in a sense in which she is not free. She saw Eire stay neutral and South Africa tremble on the edge ; only the hundreds of millions of India were committed without their consent.

Then it is to be remembered that a distrust of our political intentions has soured the disposition of Indian politicians. We believe—and honestly—that we are committed to the evolution of a completely self-governing India, free and equal within the fellowship of the Commonwealth. Indians all too often are convinced that we shall find more reasons for postponing the realisation of this end, as we have found them before. In particular they suspect our zeal for the minorities and accuse us of having invented a formula for advance—agreement of all parties—which we know merely gives the more intransigent minorities a permanent veto.

So they say that we try to run India in time of war, when we well know how important Indian industrial, economic and military help must be, with an unrepresentative government, and that our claims to be fighting the world's battle for freedom contrast ill with the fact that some thousands of *satyagrahis* are in jail, including a bevy of prime ministers and members of provincial cabinets.

So one might go on, but it is enough to assert the point, which is of major importance, that there has grown up a real barrier in understanding and sympathy and that in quite unlikely quarters one finds the kind of stubborn ill-will developing which, alas, we know so well in regard to Ireland.

BASAL FACTS IN THE CONTROVERSY

Now most reasonable men will agree, at least in the abstract, that when we find an issue about which such diametrically opposite views can be taken by serious and responsible people the issue is genuinely difficult. This is emphatically the case with India and those who over-simplify it do no real service to either side. What are the elements in the puzzle?

The Congress is the spokesman of pure nationalism. Its strength in public estimation is drawn in part from the fact that most of the men and women who have suffered for their political faith in Indian freedom belong to it. But although its wiser leaders, notably Mr. Nehru, know and have said that a purely numerical-majority type of democracy will not work in a country where there is such a minority as the Muslim, on the whole the Congress tends to stand for the view that what the majority want they should have ; that they, the Congress, represent all that matters in India ; and that no other goal but complete independence can be the goal of a self-respecting nation. Their chosen method of constitutional reform is that of the constituent assembly, elected on as wide a franchise as possible.

But the Muslims say that if any government resting upon an all-India majority system is imposed they will fight, for they do not believe that Muslims can ever get justice from any all-India government of Indians. Such a government must, in their view, be predominantly Hindu. They have put forward—or Mr. Jinnah, leader of the All-India Muslim League, has put forward the idea of Pakistan, that is, the formation of a separate Muslim India, wholly independent in finance, defence and all other essentials of government. But Mr. Jinnah's statements make it clear that he is more against an all-India government than he is for a Pakistan ; he would be content with effective Muslim control in the north-west and north-east, but what he will not tolerate is an all-Indian government, for then, he says, the Muslims will disappear.

Of other parties to the dispute it is perhaps enough to say that the Princes want to hold to as much of their privilege as they can and fear the growth of the democratic spirit,

while the smaller minorities are in the main strongly nationalist with much doubt about Congress. This is true of the "scheduled castes" or untouchables, under Dr. Ambedkar's lead; they distrust the Congress though they desire a forward move in self-government. It is true of the Indian Christians, who are more nationalist every day but are by no means sure of what their position would be under Congress government.

Here, then, has been the deadlock. The British government has not been without objective grounds to support it in saying that there had to be some new rapprochement on the part of Indians and that to base action upon the views of any one of the three major contestants would be to drive the others into hostility. Indians have held that they all alike wanted a shift of power from British to Indians, and that if only it were clear that that shift would take place they would find ways of solving their problems.

THE NEW INITIATIVE OF GOVERNMENT

When you are confronted by a problem which is in a formal sense insoluble, there is only one thing to do. You must try to discover a line of action which, even though it may in itself offer no more than a partial solution, will in fact bring into being a new situation and one to which, it may be, a solution might be found.

It is perhaps by some such reflections that the Secretary of State and the Viceroy have been guided in their recent action, for the decisions announced and debated in the House of Commons at the end of July are most hopeful when looked at in this light. The Viceroy's Council is increased so that it contains eight Indians and four British, instead of four British and three Indians, and the men chosen for the new posts, while none is now a member of the Congress, comprise both members of the Muslim League and ex-Congress-men. As a whole they are certainly not "yes-men." In addition to this large Indianisation of the Executive Council—for the first time the Viceroy's Council has a non-official majority—the government have formed a National Defence Council, an advisory body, to "associate Indian non-

official opinion as fully as possible with the prosecution of the war." These measures have been fully described in the press and need not be further detailed here.

This is not what the Congress demanded; for there is no pretence of departing from the existing constitutional position and the new Executive Council will be no more responsible to an Indian parliament than before. It is not what the Muslims wanted, for it is an all-India executive with great powers. But if full weight is given to the facts that "Dominion status" cannot be given to a government which enjoys no large electoral support (apart from the difficulty of embarking at this moment on a major constitutional change), and that the two bodies commanding electoral support wanted opposite things, it will appear that Mr. Amery and Lord Linlithgow have advanced along the only line open to them. They have tried to get a *de facto* Indian government of able and independent men. Full credit ought to be given to the Indians who have braved the opposition of Congress and League in assuming the burdens of office.

It is a most important action. Criticism fastens on three points: there is nothing more said about the future constitution; the "key" positions of defence and finance remain in British hands; there is no release of political prisoners. But it is already plain that the new move will result in action, and *out of that action* may arise a new situation less formidable in its antitheses than that which lies behind. A Viceroy's Council with a considerable majority of Indians is a solid fact; such action once taken can hardly be recalled, and if it succeeds as it ought to succeed the recalcitrance of the major parties, even if not of their titular leaders, may yield.

THE FUTURE AND THE BRITISH ATTITUDE

As one looks into the future there are three considerations which present themselves, and each of them bears rather specially upon the British position and the British need of understanding.

The first is that we are driven, if we take seriously even the more moderate form of the Muslim case, to recognise that pure majority

Parliamentarism will not suffice where we have minorities which will *on no account* accept the submerging of their peculiar life and culture (as they fear) by a majority of another community. (A tiny minority will accept what a great minority will not—compare the Protestants of Eire and those of Ulster.) The problem is soluble, for much of the fear is illusory and an economic analysis sheds much light on Hindu-Muslim rivalry. What is needed is fresh and realistic thinking, which must in the main be Indian thinking. But suspicion is so strong that any suggestion, no matter how sincere, of varying the parliamentary model is instantly taken to mean the denial of genuine self-government. At every point we come up against the need for the restoration of confidence.

One step towards such restoration—and here we come to a second point—would be a perfectly frank stating of what is in fact meant by those special British responsibilities which are always mentioned, usually in a somewhat mysterious manner, in constitutional discussions. It is fairly well known what they are. So long as there is a British Commonwealth it will be a primary interest of the Commonwealth that India is defended. The imperial aspect of the defence problem ought to be capable of open statement and discussion. There are the minorities; no British parliament ought to divest itself of its responsibilities for India unless it knows that the weak groups will not be oppressed, and Indians know that very well. To anyone who has lived in India it seems grotesque that the Muslims should be nervous of their position; it is the smaller minorities who have more to fear. There are the treaties with the Princes; they cannot be unilaterally repudiated by the British government, but no Prince of intelligence can fail to see that there is no hope in a mere opposition to the rising tide of Indian self-government. There is finance, and it is well to face the fact that here much suspicion gathers. Let the facts be brought out and boldly faced. What are India's liabilities? Did she get easier terms from the City of London than she could have got elsewhere because of the Imperial connection? And on the other hand, in view of the astronomical

figures of war finance, does it seem impossible that a scaling down of Indian debt might be agreed if that were shown to be necessary for Indian progress and in view of her rural poverty?

But all this brings us back to the main thing that is demanded of the British mind and conscience. No one who has lived in India and also in self-governing eastern countries can be in any doubt that there is a truth in what is said of "imperialism." We do in fact behave with a subtle difference of manner (not always so very subtle either) to Indians, or I suspect to Africans, from that which we use to Japanese or to Chinese. I am not thinking of the grosser forms of racial prejudice—those are happily rare in India—but of a more refined form which invades the souls even of those who believe themselves free from it, if we live in a country where our race is ruler. What is true in such things as manner is true in more important things. We do not, on the whole, see the broad simple outlines of the case as it appeals to almost every Indian. Even when he is fully aware of the difficulties in the way of self-government and sensitive to the realities of the problem he still feels that these are *his* problems and that the main question for *us* is whether we are really prepared to give up power. He can tell immediately whether we are sincere in what we urge by way of difficulty, or whether we are like the defenders of fox-hunting who plead how much the fox likes it! The Chinese have a phrase to describe a regime which has outlasted its time—"its mandate is departed." That is what is happening to the traditional forms of rule of one nation by another in our modern world. Mere independence means little; ways of securing the world's peace and order have to be beaten out on the anvil of thought and experiment, but equality of need and of responsibility is essential. The old kind of imperial rule is weakened from within and only survives in a living and constructive form where there is still a genuinely paternal and filial relationship.

Is it too much to hope that in the creation of this new understanding the Christian world-community, which is alive in India as it is in Britain, might play a decisive part?